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TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: RESIDENTS OF ISSAWIYA AND 'ANATA CRITICIZE LAND
EXPROPRIATIONS

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Members of the Issawiya and 'Anata Committees for the Defense of Land and Property and 'Anata's mayor told PolOff on February 14 that the Israeli Civil Administration expropriated 1500 dunums (roughly 375 acres) for roads through the E-1 area connecting Ma'ale Adumim to Almon and Pisgat Ze'ev. They shared concerns that such a road would strengthen Israeli control over Palestinian areas and further isolate East Jerusalem from the West Bank. (Note: A map of the area can be found on the Consulate's classified website at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/jerusalem/ind ex.cfm> by clicking on the link for Political Reporting Attachments. End note.) End Summary.

CIVIL ADMINISTRATION EXPROPRIATES
LAND FOR NEW ROAD BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS

¶2. (C) Chairman of the Issawiya Committee for the Defense of Land and Property Hani Asawi told PolOff on February 14 that the Israeli Civil Administration expropriated 1500 dunums of land which they said belongs to the Issawiya and 'Anata municipalities. Asawi said the land was already under Israeli jurisdiction and the expropriation serves to formalize control before Israel begins construction of new roads there. (Note: Issawiya falls within Jerusalem's expanded municipal boundaries, but the expropriated land is in the West Bank. End note.)

¶3. (C) Asawi said the land is located along the eastern border of the E-1 area and will be used to create a road between Ma'ale Adumim and the West Bank settlement of Almon that will ease access to Pisgat Ze'ev in Jerusalem. Asawi said the new road will eventually link to the planned Eastern Ring Road (septel), which he fears will sever East Jerusalem from the West Bank.

PALESTINIAN PLANS TO FIGHT CONFISCATION IN COURT

¶4. (C) 'Anata Mayor Muhammad Allan and Chairman of the 'Anata Committee for the Defense of Land and Property Khadir Dibs told PolOff on February 14 that a notice of pending expropriation appeared in al-Quds newspaper on January 22, but the notice stated that objections to the expropriation would not be considered. The final notice of expropriation appeared in the newspaper on February 14. Allan and Dibs said they planned to work with the residents of Issawiya and Jerusalem attorney Danny Seidemann to fight the expropriation.

RESIDENTS OF 'ANATA LOSE NEEDED LAND TO CONFISCATION

15. (C) Member of the 'Anata Committee for the Defense of Land and Property Muhammad Salama told PolOff on February 14 that half of 'Anata's land is privately owned, so expropriations hurt individuals as well as the community. Salama produced copies of Jordanian land records to demonstrate how many people were losing land in this expropriation. He said local residents believe expropriations are part of an Israeli strategy to take control of Palestinian land for settlers' benefit. The residents of 'Anata are confined to the built-up area of their land by Israeli checkpoints and the separation barrier, Salama said, and do not have access to vacant land to build new homes, schools, and cemeteries.

COMMENT

16. (C) This step appears to contradict public and private assurances by the GoI at the time of Annapolis that there would be no new land expropriation in the West Bank. According to Israeli press accounts, Prime Minister Olmert told the Israeli cabinet on November 19, 2007: "The Roadmap explicitly obligates Israel not to build new settlements or communities in Judea and Samaria or to expropriate land. We must fulfill these obligations."

WALLES